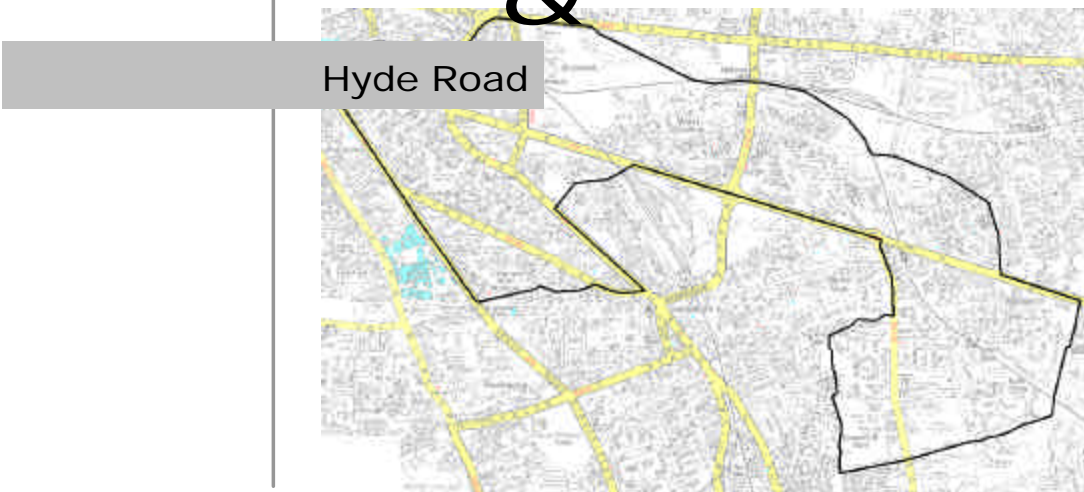


SureStart



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Evaluation Strategy 2004-2007

Summary

All local Sure Start programmes are required to take part in continuous evaluation activity, so that they can find out whether they are reaching local children and families in the way they intended, and whether their services, partnerships and working practices are having the desired effect. Whilst the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) will focus on the long-term impact of Sure Start, local evaluations should focus on ways that the design and implementation of services can be improved. Above all, the local evaluation should meet the needs of key stakeholders, since they are its primary intended users.

Sure Start MRF and Hyde Road have opted to employ a 1.0 WTE Evaluation Officer to co-ordinate the evaluation of both programmes.

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Introduction

This strategy has been developed to fulfil the evaluation requirements of the Sure Start Unit, NESS, and the two local programmes. The strategy also refers to the local and national targets of Sure Start as laid down in the Public Service Agreement and in the Service Delivery Agreements for Sure Start programmes. In addition to meeting these requirements, the evaluation will have a strong local focus, and aims to support the development of the two programmes.

Requirements of the Sure Start Unit

The requirements of the Sure Start Unit for individual programme evaluations are set out in the document [A Guide to Planning and Running your Programme, Round 6 Wave Guidance, Annex 6: Information on Evaluation](#), available at www.surestart.gov.uk. In brief, the document states that progress should be assessed in three main areas:

- Carefully monitor progress towards the objectives and targets set for Sure Start in the PSA and SDA, and reaching other milestones and targets identified in the plans
- Review the working practices and processes through which Sure Start is being delivered
- Assess whether the services being provided achieve good value for money

The document also states that programmes must assess 'performance against the national targets, but also in observing the key Sure Start principles'.

The Sure Start Unit goes on to recommend that programme evaluations should look at 'cross-cutting processes'. These are:

- Partnership working
- Community and parental involvement
- Access to services
- Service quality

In addition to this, local evaluations must assess user satisfaction. The Sure Start Unit requires evidence of ongoing evaluation activity in the form of an annual report, and an in-depth evaluation report in measurement year three of the programme.

Requirements of NESS (the National Evaluation of Sure Start)

NESS has been established both to conduct a national evaluation of the impact of Sure Start, and to advise and oversee local programme evaluations. Their full requirements are set out in *Getting Started with a Local Sure Start Programme Evaluation* NESS (2002), available at www.ness.bbk.ac.uk/guidance.asp. NESS requires an annual summary of programmes' evaluation activity, to be provided at the end of January each year.

Requirements of Sure Start MRF and Hyde Road

Sure Start MRF and Hyde Road have opted to employ an internal Evaluation Officer, who will have overall responsibility for the evaluation of both programmes. Both partnership boards agreed that by employing a full-time evaluator, the programmes would gain maximum benefit from the evaluation process. Evaluation will support the programmes in a number of ways. It will:

1. Gather information about the programme's context. For example, demographic information about the area and its population, local views on existing services and on Sure Start, past interventions in the area, and other external factors which influence the programme
2. Help to clarify the theories on which the programme is based. Set out how the people who plan and deliver the programme believe that specific interventions lead to specific outcomes
3. Test these theories and provide evidence of actual outcomes, and examine how and why these outcomes occurred
4. Facilitate improvements to the programme in order to achieve the outcomes desired

The evaluation will focus on *improvement*, rather than judgement. The box below gives examples of the kinds of questions that improvement-focused evaluations ask:

- What are the programme's strengths and weaknesses?
- To what extent are participants [children, parents and communities] progressing towards the desired outcomes?
- Which types of participants [children, parents and communities] are making good progress and which types aren't doing so well?
- What kinds of implementation problems have emerged and how are they being addressed?
- What's happening that wasn't expected?
- How are staff and clients interacting?
- What are staff and participant perceptions of the programme? What do they like? Dislike? Want to change?
- What are perceptions of the programme's culture and climate?
- How are funds being used compared to initial expectations?
- How is the programme's external environment affecting internal operations?
- What new ideas are emerging that can be tried out and tested?

From M Q Patton, Utilization-Focused Evaluation p. 68

A steering group has been established to direct the evaluation. Current membership of the steering group is:

Jane Walker – Evaluation Officer
 Richard Arnold – Chair, Hyde Road Sure Start
 Sheila Bowater – Programme Manager, Hyde Road Sure Start
 Nadia Ali – Community Development Worker, Hyde Road Sure Start
 Fliss Green – Chair, MRF Sure Start
 Patsy Carey – Programme Manager, MRF Sure Start
 Jason Kennedy – Early Years Co-ordinator, MRF Sure Start
 Alan Keane – Finance Officer, Hyde Road and MRF Sure Starts
 Jenny Hacker – Public Health Specialist Trainee, Central Manchester PCT
 Neil Bendel – Health Intelligence Specialist, Manchester Joint Health Unit

The group eventually would like to recruit parents to join the group. However, the contribution of both staff and parents will be central to the evaluation, even if they are not members of the steering group.

Evaluation aims and objectives

Evaluation aims

- To account to the community for the way in which Sure Start grants are used and programmes implemented on their behalf, and to help ensure that this is done in a way that provides the greatest benefit to them
- To inform the development of the programmes at management, service and partnership board levels
- To assist the programmes in tracking their progress towards Sure Start aims and targets
- To work within, and actively promote, the principles of Sure Start

Evaluation objectives

1. To fulfil the requirements of the Sure Start Unit and NESS in relation to evaluation
2. To support programmes in ensuring that they add value to existing services, by establishing levels of satisfaction with existing services for under 5s, and continuously seeking stakeholder views on Sure Start MRF and Hyde Rd services
3. To provide support to the programmes in ensuring that they have working practices and processes that will enable them to progress towards their aims
4. To establish what works, for whom, in what circumstances, in relation to each of the four Sure Start objectives
5. To assist the programme Boards and accountable bodies in ensuring that programmes deliver value for money
6. To consult and involve stakeholders in the design and focus of the evaluation process
7. To ensure that evaluation findings are disseminated to all relevant stakeholders, in an appropriate and accessible way
8. To ensure that evaluation findings are used to inform programme development
9. To mainstream the process and skills of evaluation, so that evaluation capacity is built within the programme and can continue beyond the life of the Sure Start grant

The Evaluation Framework

Evaluation use

'...Intended users are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings; they are more likely to understand and feel ownership if they've been actively involved...'¹ If evaluation is going to be used to inform the development of the two programmes, then strategies to ensure that stakeholders understand its purpose, can take part in shaping and carrying out the process, understand and apply findings, must be implemented from the start. This includes:

- Ongoing clarification of the remit of evaluation and the role of the Evaluation Officer
- Involvement of stakeholders in framing evaluation questions and choosing appropriate methods
- Involving stakeholders in carrying out evaluation
- Facilitating stakeholders to evaluate their own work
- Facilitating stakeholders in the interpretation of evaluation findings, and transforming these into action

The evaluation process will include a stakeholder mapping exercise for each programme (see objective 7). This will help to clarify the individuals, groups and agencies which have a stake both in the programme and its evaluation. The mapping exercise will be kept up to date, will help to ensure that all relevant views are considered, and that information from evaluation is shared with all relevant parties. Every effort will be made to target named individuals, rather than broad organisations, in order to achieve maximum utility and impact.

Methodology

This strategy is designed to underpin a variety of evaluation activities in two separate programmes over a three-year period. As a result, flexibility is needed to try out different methodologies as the programmes, their expectations of and intended uses for evaluation, develop. A range of different methodologies will also be necessary for different evaluation activities within this framework. Some methodologies will lend themselves more readily to certain activities, and in some cases, a combination of different methodologies may be necessary. There are a growing number of different methodological approaches to evaluation, each with their strengths and weaknesses, and by remaining alert to this, we will be more able to respond to the changing needs of the programmes and other intended users of evaluation. The methodology described below is one of a number that may be used.

Pawson and Tilley (1997) use the term 'realistic evaluation' to describe a particular methodology which is well suited to very diverse programmes that are in different stages of development. At the centre of this approach is the belief that 'programmes work (have successful 'outcomes') only insofar as they introduce the appropriate ideas and opportunities ('mechanisms') to groups in the appropriate social and cultural conditions ('contexts')'.² They argue that all social programmes are underpinned by the formula: context + mechanisms = outcomes.

Contexts

¹ Patton, M Q *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* p. 22

² Pawson and Tilley *Realistic Evaluation* p. 57

Evaluation must take account of the context in which programmes are being delivered. This includes the various factors present within the area, which contribute to poor social and emotional development, health, educational attainment, and lack of family and community capacity. It also includes variations *within* the programme area, variations in the way that the programme is implemented within the area, and external causal forces, such as other local initiatives and the wider political agenda.

Mechanisms

Everything about the programme, from the processes through which it is managed and arranged, to its working practices, the services it delivers, and the partnerships it forms with other agencies and the community it serves, can be described as mechanisms. Mechanisms are the steps that programmes take in order to achieve their desired outcomes. Within Sure Start, decisions about what mechanisms to put in place are made at a local level, based upon local priorities and contexts, and theories that these mechanisms will lead to desired outcomes. Local programmes' choice of mechanisms will be influenced by a number of factors or theories about what works. For example, they may be based on the experiences, expertise or training of programme stakeholders, on research or empirical evidence, national policy, or a combination of these. The evaluation process allows us to test theories about what works, by examining how mechanisms lead to outcomes, within the context of the programme. The end result is that programmes can use this knowledge to improve their theories and mechanisms.

Outcomes

Appendix 1 summarises the aims, objectives, principles and measurable targets of Sure Start nationally. The performance of Sure Start nationally 'will be calculated by averaging the performance of all operational programmes', but 'each Sure Start local programme and children's centre will work towards achieving each of the relevant targets in a three year period from their first full year of operation'.³ These targets have been chosen, not because they represent everything that Sure Start is trying to achieve, but because they are believed to be indicators of the broader Sure Start aim, i.e. improved chances for children and families. It is important to recognise that the outcomes of the programmes must be considered at an appropriate stage in their development, so that we begin by looking at short-term and medium-term outcomes. Evaluation will help programmes to identify the outcomes they actually achieve, at both process and service levels. It will also help to explain *how* these outcomes were achieved, by linking them to contexts and mechanisms.

In summary, the purpose of a realistic evaluation is to discover what works, for whom, and in what circumstances. This is achieved by investigating the relationships between contexts, mechanisms and outcomes. A realistic evaluator will need to:

- Establish what the intended outcomes of the programme are
- Clarify what services and interventions (mechanisms) have been established in order to achieve these outcomes, and how these mechanisms are expected to bring about the intended outcomes
- Investigate what other factors in the community, organisations, and in the wider social and political context, influence the mechanisms that are put in place by the programme, and what influence they have
- Investigate what actual outcomes there are as a result of the programme
- Present these findings to programme decision-makers, and facilitate improvements to the programme
- Continue to test the programme's theories about what works, for whom, and in what circumstances

³ Sure Start Unit [PSA Targets: Annex A, Technical Note for Public Service Agreement 2003-4 to 2005-6](http://www.surestart.gov.uk/aboutsurestart/makingsurestartwork/psatargets) available at www.surestart.gov.uk/aboutsurestart/makingsurestartwork/psatargets

Building evaluation capacity

Objective 9 of the evaluation is to 'Mainstream the process and skills of evaluation, so that evaluation capacity is built within the programme and can continue beyond the life of the Sure Start grant'. In order to achieve this, a 'bank' of sessional workers with a variety of skills will be established, and a suitable training programme will be developed to meet their needs. These workers will have the opportunity to become involved in a full range of evaluation activities, and receive training in research methods, ethics, confidentiality, data protection, and other relevant topics. Local parents, carers and community members will be actively encouraged and supported, through payment and the provision of crèche facilities, to join this 'bank'.

As the programmes develop, and local parents increase in confidence, we aim to adopt participatory evaluation methodology. This puts local parents, carers and community members at its centre, giving them control over every aspect of the evaluation, and supporting them in carrying it out. Programmes are currently in their early stages, developing relationships and trust with local parents and carers. They are also working to involve parents and carers in the programme as Board and task group members. For this reason, we will *work towards* participatory evaluation, to minimise the burden placed upon parents

The role of the evaluator

The Evaluation Officer may take on many different roles, as the work plan and needs of the programmes progress. These include trainer, learner, facilitator, and advocate (Fetterman 1996). The evaluator is a 'co-learner rather than expert, conveyor of information rather than deliverer of truth' (Weiss 1983), 'educator rather than judge' (Brown 1994). Evaluators must '...make sure that rival hypotheses and interpretations are always on the table, and...advocate the use of evaluation findings to inform action' (Brown 1994). She may be seen as a negotiator, 'negotiating with primary intended users what other roles he or she will play... Role selection follows from and is dependent on intended use by intended users' (Patton 1997). As the evaluation moves towards participatory methods, the roles of facilitator and co-learner will become more prominent.

Accountability and standards for evaluation practice

One of the aims of the evaluation is to account to the community for the way in which Sure Start grants are used, and programmes are implemented on their behalf. The evaluation must serve a range of purposes and interests in an appropriately balanced way. Ultimately, it has the interests of parents, carers, children and the wider communities of the MRF and Hyde Road areas, at its centre.

The American Evaluation Association's Programme Evaluation Standards are attached at Appendix 2. These set out what should be expected from evaluation, and provide a set of standards for practice. The Evaluation Officer will have access to regular ongoing professional supervision by a suitably qualified individual who is not connected to the programme or any of its stakeholders.

If any stakeholder has concerns about the manner in which evaluation has been conducted, the representation of their views, data protection, confidentiality issues, etc., these can be addressed through the following course of action:

1. In the first instance, where possible, concerns can be raised with the Evaluation Officer directly

2. If a stakeholder is unsatisfied with the response, or would prefer to talk to someone else in confidence, they can approach the PCT's Health and Communities Manager or another member of the evaluation steering group
3. If a stakeholder would prefer to speak to someone who is not directly involved in the evaluation of the two programmes, they can approach the professional supervisor

Validity, reliability and interpretation of findings

The Evaluator must strive to be rational, rigorous and fair. In doing this, a full range of research techniques can be used, to suit different topics, participants, data requirements, time-scales, budgets and expectations. Topics will be researched using a combination of different methods, in order to cross-check the reliability of findings. Participants in the evaluation will be asked to validate evaluation findings, and check that their views and experiences have been represented in a rational and fair way. The Evaluation Officer will facilitate the interpretation of evaluation findings, and the transformation of these into action, by key stakeholders.

Ethics

The NESS document Conducting Ethical Research (April 2002) states that 'research is not just a matter of collecting information, but is concerned with the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of those who take part in the research' (p. 3). This is particularly true of evaluation, because the people who take part in it will also be stakeholders in the programme – staff, partner organisations, parents and carers, members of the community, and so on. The standards for practice which are attached at Appendix 2 include eight propriety standards, which outline how we will ensure that the evaluation is conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved and affected by its results. Informed, written consent will be sought from all participants in the evaluation. We are committed to making sure that participants fully understand the purpose of the evaluation, their right to withdraw, how the information they share will be stored and used, and the steps we will take to protect their confidentiality. Approval for the evaluation will be sought from the Local Research Ethics Committee. This will help to ensure that due consideration has been given to ethical issues, and that steps have been taken to minimise any potential harm to those taking part.

Confidentiality

1. Data storage and handling

The names and addresses of, and any other personal information relating to participants, will be stored separately from data such as interview transcripts and questionnaires. Participants will be linked to the data by the use of an ID number, which will be accessed only by the Evaluation Officer. Similarly, interview transcripts, completed questionnaires, and any other raw data, will be stored securely and accessed only by the Evaluation Officer. The evaluation will be conducted within the framework and principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, attached at Appendix 4. The full Act can be found at www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998.19980029.htm. Information that is obtained for research purposes is subject to a number of exemptions to the Data Protection Act. A summary of these is also included at Appendix 4.

2. Reporting of findings

Participants' opinions will not be attributed to identifiable individuals. In addition, their opinions will not be discussed with other professionals or people connected to the programmes. The only exception to this will be in the case of child protection concerns. Before they are reported, participants will be asked to check that their

views and experiences have been represented rationally and fairly. Every effort will be made to ensure that different views and perspectives are represented, without the identity of participants being revealed or inferred.

Evaluation Plan

The following plan broadly describes the actions needed to achieve each evaluation objective, and lists the intended outputs from each area of work. The plan is intended as an overview of evaluation activities over a three-year period, and this is reflected in the level of detail it contains.

Evaluation Plan 2004-2007				
Evaluation objective(s)	Actions	By when	Lead	Outputs
1. To fulfil the requirements of the Sure Start Unit and NESS in relation to monitoring and evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish systems for information sharing with ?Monitoring Officer 2. Produce annual and three-yearly reports 3. Procure specialist database software to assist with monitoring and evaluation process and programme operations 4. ?Recruit a 1.0 WTE Monitoring Officer to work across both programmes, managing the database and supporting the Evaluation Officer 	<p>Nov 03</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Nov 03</p> <p>Jan 04</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>JW</p> <p>PC & SB</p> <p>Steering group</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual evaluation reports for both programmes 2. Three-year evaluation reports for both programmes 3. Monthly monitoring returns
2. To support programmes in ensuring that they add value to existing services, establishing levels of satisfaction with existing services for 0-4s, and continuously seeking stakeholder views on Sure Start MRF and Hyde Rd services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct user satisfaction surveys, involving stakeholders in design, data collection, agreeing actions and recommendations 2. Compile demographic, ethnographic and historical data about the MRF and Hyde Rd areas, so that programmes are considered in their local context 	<p>Jan 04 & Jan 06</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>JW</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baseline data providing local views on services for 0-4s pre-Sure Start 2. Evidence that 75% of local people report an improvement in these services under Sure Start
3. To provide support to the programmes in ensuring that they have working practices and processes that will enable them to progress towards their aims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct initial process evaluation which represents the views of major stakeholders, and describes the way in which the programmes are being delivered 2. Agree recommendations and actions with stakeholders 3. Use findings to help stakeholders prioritise further evaluation activities 4. Repeat the process evaluation exercise 	<p>Apr 04</p> <p>Apr 04</p> <p>Apr 04</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>Steering group</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of programme structures and 'cross-cutting' processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working • Community and parental involvement • Access to services • Service quality
4. To establish what works, for whom, in what circumstances, against each of	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out themed evaluation of programme activities and structures, to 	<p>Ongoing from Apr</p>	<p>JW and steering</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence of programmes' contribution to:

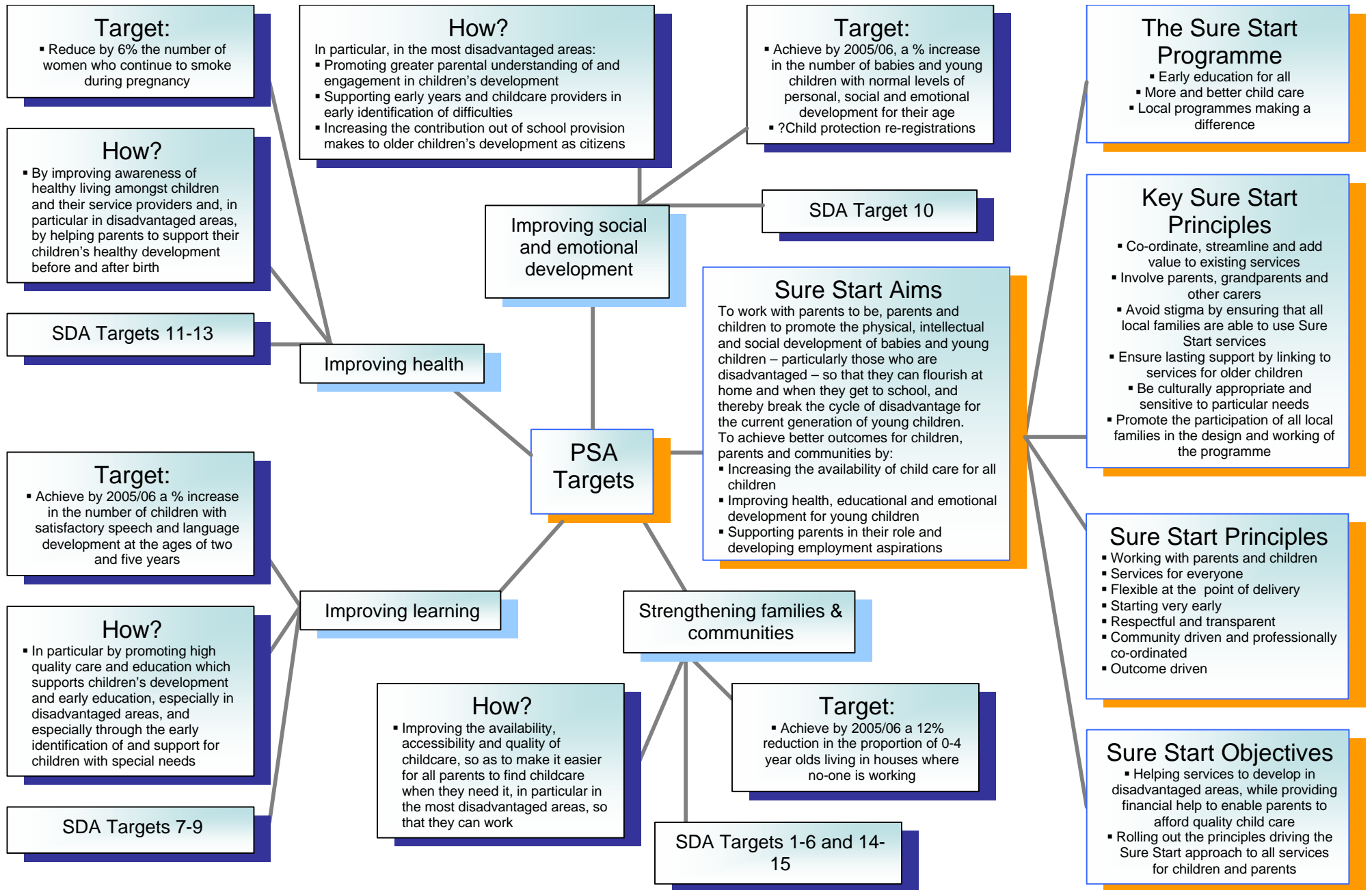
Evaluation Plan 2004-2007

Evaluation objective(s)	Actions	By when	Lead	Outputs
the four Sure Start objectives	establish their contribution and effectiveness in working towards the Sure Start objectives 2. Establish information sharing protocols with relevant NHS and non-NHS agencies, working within the Data Protection Act 1998 3. Maintain awareness of external (e.g. social and political) factors associated with the evaluation, and use this knowledge when designing & conducting evaluation 4. Spend time at the beginning of the evaluation observing and getting to know the programme	04 Jan-Apr 04 Ongoing Ongoing	group JW/AK JW JW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving social & emotional development • Improving health • Improving children's ability to learn • Strengthening families and communities • 'Building a brighter future' (use of capital funds) 2. Programme impact and outcomes are considered within the local and national context
5. To assist the programme Boards and accountable bodies in ensuring that programmes deliver value for money	1. Include a 'value for money' element in all evaluation of programme activities 2. Submit regular financial monitoring information to programme boards 3. Provide stakeholders with both economic and other relevant evaluation findings, when making decisions about the use of Sure Start funds	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	JW, AK, Monitoring Officer? AK JW, AK	1. A combination of economic and other data to be used to inform decision-making
6. Consult and actively involve stakeholders in the design and focus of the evaluation process	1. Identify and map stakeholders in the programme and in its evaluation 2. Target named individuals, rather than organisations 3. Learn how stakeholders view the evaluation's importance, how they want to use evaluation results, what information would be useful to them, and what are the	Jan 04 Ongoing Jan-Apr 04 and Ongoing	JW JW JW/steering group	1. Evaluation addresses the information needs of intended users 2. Stakeholders are able to contribute expertise and experience to improve the evaluation's design

Evaluation Plan 2004-2007				
Evaluation objective(s)	Actions	By when	Lead	Outputs
	<p>appropriate methods/ formats/languages for providing this information</p> <p>4. Give stakeholders realistic expectations about what evaluation can achieve</p> <p>5. Ensure that the evaluation programme is responsive to the needs of key stakeholders, by describing it clearly, and demonstrating that it is realistic and technically sound</p> <p>6. Allow for flexibility in evaluation planning, questions, and budgeting</p> <p>7. Pilot research procedures and instruments to ensure they are practical and will yield the relevant data</p> <p>8. Take steps to minimise disruptions to programme activity, and burden on stakeholders</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>JW/steering group</p> <p>JW/steering group</p> <p>JW/Steering group</p> <p>JW</p> <p>JW/Steering group</p>	
7. To establish a process for dissemination of evaluation findings to all relevant stakeholders	<p>1. Identify relevant users and stakeholders at the planning stage of all evaluation activities</p> <p>2. Ensure that evaluation findings are presented to these users and stakeholders in appropriate and accessible formats</p>	<p>Jan-Feb 04 and ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>JW/steering group</p>	<p>1. Evaluation findings are disseminated to all relevant stakeholders, in such a way that their implications can be clearly understood</p> <p>2. Evaluation helps to create a culture of learning and improvement</p> <p>3. Good practice, learning and development are shared between the MRF and Hyde Rd programmes</p> <p>4. Evaluation findings are used</p>

Evaluation Plan 2004-2007				
Evaluation objective(s)	Actions	By when	Lead	Outputs
				to inform the development of practice outside the programmes
8. To ensure that evaluation findings are used to inform programme development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with intended users to specify intended uses, at the planning stage of all evaluation activities 2. Target individual decision-makers, and their broad range of information needs, rather than focusing evaluation activities towards specific decisions 3. Maintain a high level of involvement in and awareness of programme activities 4. Be aware of and responsive to relevant external developments in policy and practice for children and families 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>JW/steering group</p> <p>JW/steering group</p> <p>JW</p> <p>JW</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholders have ownership of evaluation findings, which leads to action 2. Evaluation activities are focused on utilization and improvement
9. Mainstream the process and skills of evaluation, so that evaluation capacity is built within the programme and can continue beyond the life of the Sure Start grant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a bank of local workers, parents and community members to carry out a range of evaluation and research activities 2. Provide or commission a programme of training in relevant skills areas, working towards providing an accredited course 3. Work towards the use of a participatory evaluation methodology, as the programme develops 	<p>Jan 04 – ongoing</p> <p>Starting Feb 04</p> <p>2005/06</p>	<p>JW/RA</p> <p>JW/RA</p> <p>JW/Steering group</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A trained and skilled 'survey team' able to carry out evaluation activities 2. Training and employment opportunities created for community members 3. Continuous and sustainable evaluation activity

Appendix 1: Summary of Sure Start national aims, objectives and targets



THE PROGRAM EVALUATION STANDARDS

Prepared by:

Mary E. Ramlow
The Evaluation Center

Western Michigan University And adopted by the American Evaluation Association (www.eval.org)

Summary of the Standards

Utility Standards

The utility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users.

U1 Stakeholder Identification Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed.

U2 Evaluator Credibility The persons conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation, so that the evaluation findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.

U3 Information Scope and Selection Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders

U4 Values Identification The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings should be carefully described, so that the bases for value judgments are clear.

U5 Report Clarity Evaluation reports should clearly describe the program being evaluated, including its context, and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation, so that essential information is provided and easily understood.

U6 Report Timeliness and Dissemination Significant interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users, so that they can be used in a timely fashion.

U7 Evaluation Impact Evaluations should be planned, conducted, and reported in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders, so that the likelihood that the evaluation will be used is increased.

Feasibility Standards

The feasibility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.

F1 Practical Procedures The evaluation procedures should be practical, to keep disruption to a minimum while needed information is obtained.

F2 Political Viability The evaluation should be planned and conducted with anticipation of the different positions of various interest groups, so that their cooperation may be obtained, and so that possible attempts by any of these groups to curtail evaluation operations or to bias or misapply the results can be averted or counteracted.

F3 Cost Effectiveness The evaluation should be efficient and produce information of sufficient value, so that the resources expended can be justified

Propriety Standards

The propriety standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted

legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.

P1 Service Orientation Evaluations should be designed to assist organizations to address and effectively serve the needs of the full range of targeted participants.

P2 Formal Agreements Obligations of the formal parties to an evaluation (what is to be done, how, by whom, when) should be agreed to in writing, so that these parties are obligated to adhere to all conditions of the agreement or formally to renegotiate it.

P3 Rights of Human Subjects Evaluations should be designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects.

P4 Human Interactions Evaluators should respect human dignity and worth in their interactions with other persons associated with an evaluation, so that participants are not threatened or harmed.

P5 Complete and Fair Assessment The evaluation should be complete and fair in its examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the program being evaluated, so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

P6 Disclosure of Findings The formal parties to an evaluation should ensure that the full set of evaluation findings along with pertinent limitations are made accessible to the persons affected by the evaluation and any others with expressed legal rights to receive the results.

P7 Conflict of Interest Conflict of interest should be dealt with openly and honestly, so that it does not compromise the evaluation processes and results.

P8 Fiscal Responsibility The evaluator's allocation and expenditure of resources should reflect sound accountability procedures and otherwise be prudent and ethically responsible, so that expenditures are accounted for and appropriate

Accuracy Standards

The accuracy standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of the program being evaluated.

A1 Program Documentation The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately, so that the program is clearly identified.

A2 Context Analysis The context in which the program exists should be examined in enough detail, so that its likely influences on the program can be identified.

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail, so that they can be identified and assessed.

A4 Defensible Information Sources The sources of information used in a program evaluation should be described in enough detail, so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.

A5 Valid Information The information-gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the interpretation arrived at is valid for the intended use.

A6 Reliable Information The information-gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use.

A7 Systematic Information The information collected, processed, and reported in

an evaluation should be systematically reviewed, and any errors found should be corrected.

A8 Analysis of Quantitative Information Quantitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A9 Analysis of Qualitative Information Qualitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A10 Justified Conclusions The conclusions reached in an evaluation should be explicitly justified, so that stakeholders can assess them.

A11 Impartial Reporting Reporting procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation, so that evaluation reports fairly reflect the evaluation findings.

A12 Metaevaluation The evaluation itself should be formatively and summatively evaluated against these and other pertinent standards, so that its conduct is appropriately guided and, on completion, stakeholders can closely examine its strengths and weaknesses.

Sure Start Evaluation Officer

Job Title: Sure Start Evaluation Officer

Salary: A&C 6

Location: Mauldeth House, Chorlton

Reports To: Health and Communities Manager

Employing Body: Central Manchester PCT

Purpose of the Job:

To further develop, manage and implement all aspects of the evaluation programmes for Sure Start Hyde Rd and Sure Start Moss Side, Rusholme and Fallowfield (MRF).

Main Duties.

1. To further develop the draft evaluation plan currently in place. This will include scoping out the full extent of the evaluation programme
2. To develop a working relationship with both the Hyde Rd and MRF Sure Start programmes
3. To develop a working relationship with the Evaluation Steering Group in such a way that the group can provide insight and add value to the evaluation programme.
4. To draw on best practice from other programmes in terms of evaluation and to work with Hyde Road and MRF Sure Start Board to ensure this knowledge is fed into the programmes planning mechanisms appropriately.
5. To establish appropriate data collection methodologies using both quantitative and qualitative techniques as appropriate.
6. To analyse and interpret data collected as appropriate.

7. To draft evaluation reports and communicate findings to a variety of audiences.
8. To work with the Sure Start Unit to ensure all evaluation is completed in a manner that is acceptable to themselves and meets their requirements.
9. To ensure the programme is informed of and kept abreast of policy developments in services for children and young people.
10. To positively promote the Central Manchester's Equal Opportunity Policy.
11. To work within Central PCT's research guidelines.
12. Support sessional staff and volunteers with respect to evaluation.
13. To carry out other duties, with respect to evaluation, as deemed appropriate by the two Sure Start Boards and CMPCT.

This is a three year fixed term contract in the first instance although as both programmes are over ten years there will be opportunities for the post to be confirmed after the three years.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria	Method Of Assessment
A graduate qualification in a relevant social science or an equivalent degree of knowledge with at least two years social research experience. (or equivalent experience)	Application Form / Interview
An understanding of evaluation methodologies and the ability to implement such methodologies.	Application Form / Interview
Excellent interpersonal skills	Interview
Excellent written and verbal communication skills.	Application Form / Interview
Good organisational skills.	Application Form / Interview
Be able to organise own work load work with minimum supervision.	Application Form / Interview
Ability to work collaboratively alongside parents, professionals and Sure Start staff.	Application Form / Interview
A commitment and sensitivity to equal opportunities and an appreciation of issues relating to race and culture.	Application Form / Interview
Good Information Technology skills especially Microsoft Office. (Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint)	Application Form / Interview
Must be able to work flexibly and there will be limited out of regular office hours working.	Application Form / Interview
Desirable	
Knowledge / Understanding of Childrens Services especially Early Years.	Application Form / Interview
Experience of designing quantitative and qualitative research methodology	Application Form / Interview

Appendix 4 (from Data Protection Act 1998)

SCHEDULE

1

THE DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES

PART I

THE PRINCIPLES

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless-
 - (a) at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is met, and
 - (b) in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 is also met.
2. Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
4. Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

Research,
history and
statistics.

33. - (1) In this section-

"research purposes" includes statistical or historical purposes;

"the relevant conditions", in relation to any processing of personal data, means the conditions-

(a) that the data are not processed to support measures or decisions with respect to particular individuals, and

(b) that the data are not processed in such a way that substantial damage or substantial distress is, or is likely to be, caused to any data subject.

(2) For the purposes of the second data protection principle, the further processing of personal data only for research purposes in compliance with the relevant conditions is not to be regarded as incompatible with the purposes for which they were obtained.

(3) Personal data which are processed only for research purposes in compliance with the relevant conditions may, notwithstanding the fifth data protection principle, be kept indefinitely.

(4) Personal data which are processed only for research purposes are exempt from section 7 if-

(a) they are processed in compliance with the relevant conditions, and

(b) the results of the research or any resulting statistics are not made available in a form which identifies data subjects or any of them.

(5) For the purposes of subsections (2) to (4) personal data are not to be treated as processed otherwise than for research purposes merely because the data are disclosed-

(a) to any person, for research purposes only,

(b) to the data subject or a person acting on his behalf,

(c) at the request, or with the consent, of the data subject or a person acting on his behalf, or

(d) in circumstances in which the person making the disclosure has reasonable grounds for believing that the disclosure falls within paragraph (a), (b) or (c).

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